

DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART

THE MENIL COLLECTION

news

**THE DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART AND THE MENIL COLLECTION
ANNOUNCE JOINT ACQUISITION:
A MAJOR 2009 SCULPTURE BY MAURIZIO CATTELAN**



Dallas/Houston, May 23, 2011 -- The Dallas Museum of Art and the Menil Collection in Houston announced today the joint acquisition of a major sculpture by the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan, one of the most significant and provocative artists to emerge since the 1990s. This marks the first time that either the Dallas Museum of Art or the Menil Collection has acquired a work of art with a fellow museum.

The work, *Untitled* (2009), is both painting and sculpture, consisting of what looks to be an everyday push-broom pinning a canvas to a wall, distorting its surface. The work creates a nearly physical sense of discomfort for the viewer. While Cattelan draws on art historical precedents created by artists including Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, and Italian post–World War II masters, the DMA-Menil work is a quizzical and challenging object that is all his own and entirely contemporary. Its informed irreverence to tradition and its ability to challenge our understanding of art make it a strong addition to each museum’s collection.

The work currently is on view at the Menil Collection.

It was acquired for the DMA through a gift from the Rachofsky Collection and Deedie and Rusty Rose, and for the Menil Collection through a gift from Nina and Michael Zilkha.

The Rachofsky Collection, which has been promised to the DMA as a bequest, includes another iconic Cattelan sculpture, *Drummer Boy*, which was memorably displayed on the roof above the reflecting pool in the DMA Sculpture Garden during *Fast Forward*. The kinetic, musical *Drummer Boy* could also be seen—and heard—on the roof of the Menil during the long run of its Cattelan exhibition last year.

“We are extremely pleased to deepen the Dallas Museum of Art’s holdings of modern and contemporary Italian art with such a quintessential work by Maurizio Cattelan. This forceful hybrid of painting and sculpture slyly shakes up our ideas of what constitutes

art, and makes us question how we experience works of art in a museum context,” said Bonnie Pitman, The Eugene McDermott Director of the Dallas Museum of Art. “The DMA’s collaboration with the Menil on this acquisition will strengthen the collections of both institutions and provide our audiences with greater access to the most exceptional of modern and contemporary artworks.”

“This work by Maurizio Cattelan resonates powerfully with and within the Menil Collection,” said Menil Director Josef Helfenstein, “drawing connections as it does between the museum’s modern-and-contemporary galleries and rooms devoted to Surrealism. It encapsulates this singular artist’s signature style—surprising and even startling viewers at first glance. Following our recent solo Cattelan exhibition, we are thrilled that this work will remain in Texas, thanks to our teamwork with the Dallas Museum of Art and the special generosity of our friends.”

In *Untitled* (2009) the use of common objects echoes Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades and Robert Rauschenberg’s combines. The work also makes reference to postwar Italian artists Piero Manzoni, Lucio Fontana, and Alberto Burri, who wrapped, enfolded, and distorted various types of cloth and materials around the traditional rectangular structures of a painting. Unlike these time-honored approaches, however, Cattelan’s *Untitled* prompts a sense of physical dislocation and discomfort, as the broom handle pushes into the canvas, upsetting its smooth surface and then seeming to be abandoned. As such, the work is quintessential Cattelan, drawing upon art historical references while continuing to push the limits of contemporary aesthetics through a sense of visceral effrontery and absurdity.

About Maurizio Cattelan

Known for his quizzical, startling, and often disquieting sculptures and installations, Maurizio Cattelan creates work infused with comical yet deeply informed critiques of art, art history, politics, and contemporary life. Born in Padua, Italy, in 1960 and based in New York and Milan, Cattelan began his career as a furniture designer. His shift into artistic practice allowed Cattelan to better explore his interest in paradox, the meaning of transgression, and the limits and extremes of what is deemed acceptable. Constantly experimenting with new materials, strategies, and contexts, Cattelan creates objects that remain suspended between reality and fiction in a continuous tug of war between the tolerable and the outrageous.

Cattelan has exhibited at The Menil Collection (2010), The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2003), Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2003), The Museum of Modern Art, New York (1998), and the Tate Gallery, London (1999), and participated in the Venice Biennale in 1993, 1997, 1999, and 2002. He was a finalist for the Guggenheim’s Hugo Boss prize in 2000, received an honorary degree in sociology from the University of Trento, Italy, in 2004, and was also awarded the Arnold-Bode prize from the Kunstverein Kassel, Germany, that same year.

About the Dallas Museum of Art

Located in the vibrant Arts District of downtown Dallas, Texas, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) ranks among the leading art institutions in the country and is distinguished by its innovative exhibitions and groundbreaking educational programs. At the heart of the Museum and its programs are its global collections, which encompass more than 24,000 works and span 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Established in 1903, the Museum welcomes more than 600,000 visitors annually and acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary readings, and dramatic and dance presentations.

The Dallas Museum of Art is supported in part by the generosity of Museum members and donors and by the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas/Office of Cultural Affairs and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

About the Menil Collection

The Menil Collection, a modern landmark designed by the architect Renzo Piano, opened in 1987 to preserve, exhibit, and grow the art collection of the late philanthropists John and Dominique de Menil. Housing treasures from prehistoric times to the present day, the Menil presents its large collection in rotation—as well as special exhibitions throughout the year—in a tranquil, contemplative setting. Admission to the Menil and all of its exhibitions and public programs is free of charge. Located in the heart of Houston's Museum District, the Menil is open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). www.menil.org

Image credit: Maurizio Cattelan, *Untitled*, 2009. Canvas, wood, and plastic. 82 5/8 x 33 1/2 x 23 5/8 inches

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